

# ARREST AND SEARCH TECHNIQUES STUDY GUIDE 2010



This study guide is designed to provide the law enforcement Explorer with basic principles. The guide is not all inclusive, and does not delineate specific techniques that must be used. The focus of this guide is to provide principals that are flexible and adaptable to various law enforcement situations.

Following the basic principals in this guide should allow the law enforcement Explorer to successfully handle various law enforcement training activities safely and professionally.

The study guide was developed through the cooperation of International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.



# **ARREST AND SEARCH TECHNIQUES**

## **STUDY GUIDE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study guide is designed to provide the law enforcement explorer with the basic principals concerning arrest and search procedures. This guide is not all inclusive, and does not delineate specific techniques that must be used. The focus of this guide is to provide principals that are flexible and adaptable to various law enforcement situations.

Following the basic principals in this guide, should allow the law enforcement explorer to successfully handle various law enforcement situations safely and professionally. The principals in this guide are utilized by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to train federal officers and agents from more than 72 federal agencies.

## **THREAT ASSESSMENT**

There is an inherent danger associated with the law enforcement profession. Whether an officer is in a metropolitan area or a rural community, wearing a badge and a gun will put him in dangerous situations.

Threat assessment is the act of becoming aware of a situation directly through the senses, including hearing and seeing, thereby making a reasonable determination about the risks involved. Any suspect potentially can be assaultive and use deadly force. However, approaching every suspect in a high-risk mode (e.g., guns drawn) would be unreasonable. There can be many articulable facts that support threat assessment. Some of the facts used in this judgment decision are listed below; it is not a comprehensive list:

- NCIC Information
- BOLO Information
- Physical actions
- Suspect statements and/or spontaneous utterances
- Suspicion level - Some or Mere/Reasonable/Probable Cause
- Time of day
- Number of officers/suspects
- Size & ability of officers/suspects
- Prior history/Criminal History
- Officer's experiences
- Age - Officer vs. Suspect
- Visible awareness - visible weapons/unusual bulges/unusual nervousness/hands in view
- Frailness of suspect
- Physical/mental disability of suspect
- Magnetometer results

Some of the facts above can be aggravating or mitigating. For example, if the suspect is elderly his age could be a mitigating factor reducing the perceived threat level. Remember, no matter what age a suspect is, guns are the great equalizers. Remember, no matter what age a suspect is, guns are the great equalizers. In 1997 at Calexico, California, a seventy- four year-old man was

taken to be searched after a Customs Canine Enforcement Officer's dog alerted on his vehicle for narcotics. In the search room the elderly man shot two officers. One of the injured officers returned fire and stopped the attack. His shots killed the suspect.

In addition to the prior list, there are also a number of articulable verbal and nonverbal signals that indicate an assault is probable or even imminent. Assessing behavior and preventing a physical assault should be accomplished whenever possible. It is critical for an officer to recognize and assess aggressive verbal and physical actions of a person. Recognizing verbal and nonverbal aggressive behavior signals will aid the officer in preventing and de-escalating situations. Also, it prepares the officer mentally and physically to take immediate counter actions should a physical assault occur.

Before physical action by an aggressor occurs, that individual usually begins to threaten to attack, in an attempt to intimidate the opponent, through a process sometimes called posturing, ritualized combat, or affective aggression. These "pre-assault indicators" are listed below. This is not an all-inclusive list:

- Verbal aggression - yelling, swearing, etc.
- A change in posture - stands taller, sets head and shoulders, moves away/moves closer, points, forms fist and/or loads the arm.
- Face becomes red, lips separate to show teeth, breathing becomes faster, and perspiration appears on the skin.
- Individual ignores others, looks away or stares through people.
- Creates a false sense of security by becoming very cooperative or acting incapacitated.
- Aggression redirected to something/someone else, such as breaking pencils, kicking, chairs, yelling at bystanders
- Individual's stance changes - blades body, lowers center of gravity, shifts weight.
- Lips become tight as breathing, though still rapid, deepens. The face loses its flush to become pale.
- Hands tighten, open or closed, arms and shoulders will shift.
- Individual may bob or rock while shifting eyes to possible targets.
- Individual may stop all motion in defiance.
- Head will come down, chin tucked, eyebrows tightened and dropped.

## **RESPONSES BASED UPON THREAT ASSESSMENT**

### **Position of advantage**

Officers should position themselves so they have a position of advantage over those persons they contact. Threat assessment is the key to determining which position of advantage an officer should use. Positions of advantage can provide safety but must be balanced with efficiency. For example, when issuing the driver of a vehicle a speeding ticket the officer notices a weapon. It is likely that he will go from a position of low hands ready to a position of cover/distance and a high ready (pistol) position. Why not take the position of cover before seeing the weapon? Safety vs. efficiency, he cannot issue routine traffic tickets from behind cover. However, by being alert he can maximize his safety even during face-to-face encounters. Remember an

officer's position of advantage changes based on his threat assessment because different situations necessitate different positioning. No two situations are exactly alike.

### **Field Interview Stance**

The purpose of the field interview stance also known as the field interrogation stance or F.I. stance is to give the officer a proactive non-aggressive approach to self-defense. Officers should be in a F.I. Stance whenever they are armed and near any member of the public. To assume this stance, an officer must blade the trunk of his body with the gun (dominant) side turned away from the person addressed. He positions his feet about shoulder width apart, with the knees slightly bent to have good balance. The non-dominant leg is forward and the dominant leg back. He distributes his body weight equally to allow for quick movement in any direction. He keeps his arms close to his sides, his dominant arm's elbow close to his handgun and his hands near his centerline. The non-dominant hand is used for gesturing if necessary. This position keeps the officer's firearm farther away from a potential threat.

### **Low Ready Position**

The low hands ready position is almost the same as the F.I. Stance except the hands are held just up from the waist line in a palms down manner almost as if to gesture "calm down." This hand position is a very good method to calm or keep a situation non-aggressive while ensuring the officer is ready for self-defense against a spontaneous face-to-face attack. This position should be used during any low threat face-to-face detention or arrest.

### **High Ready Position**

The high ready position is slightly different than the low ready position. In the high ready position, the officer's hands are brought up to protect the head, while simultaneously widening their feet and lowering their center of gravity. Widening the feet is known as "getting a base". When getting a good base, the officers should have their feet more than shoulder width apart (wide), their feet should be offset, with the non-dominant foot forward (deep), and they should lower their center of gravity keeping their head over their center. This allows the officer the best position for defending themselves and allows for tactical movement.

When moving to the high ready position, the officer should provide loud verbal commands to the suspect such as "get back, don't resist". This asserts that the officer is in control of the arrest situation as well as identifying to the suspect and other possible witnesses what the officer wants the suspect to do.

### **Contact and cover**

Contact and cover is a principal that allows multiple officers to control subjects during a law enforcement encounter. Designated roles of contact officer and cover officer are given so the responsibilities of the officers at the scene of an enforcement situation are clearly defined. Having clearly defined responsibilities will provide greater safety for all officers. When referring to safety most officers think about preventing an assailant, not a partner, from hurting them. Contact/cover procedures are safer than working alone only if each person understands how to work with a partner. If the officers do not understand how to work as a team, there is little benefit to having a partner. In fact, a partner can actually hurt other officers through accidental shootings or creating a false sense of safety.

The contact officer is responsible for communication with the suspect and such things as recording incident information, searching suspects, issuing citations, and radio communications. The cover officers are there for scene safety, to witness/backup the contact officer, for control of all suspects, and to ensure integrity in the chain of custody for evidence.

When positioning themselves, the officers should approach the suspect in what is known as a tactical "L" position. This is when the contact officer is position in front of the subject at a slight angle, and the cover officer positions themselves just outside the peripheral vision of the subject. The positioning allows both officers to observe the subject(s) without getting involved in a crossfire situation.

### **Arriving on scene**

When arriving on scene, or sometimes prior to arriving on scene, a law enforcement officer will start the threat assessment process as was described earlier in the study guide. When the officer physically arrives on scene, they can assess some of the physical characteristics that can be used to their advantage such as cover and concealment.

### **Cover**

The term "cover" for law enforcement officers means an object or barrier that stops, deflects or substantially slows down bullets. Cover is better than concealment for officers in a high-risk situation because it provides better protection. Cover will change depending upon the type of weapon and bullets used. Some commonly available types of cover include:

- Ballistic shields
- Car engine blocks
- Car tires (brakes and brake drums)
- Metal or concrete structural columns
- Corners of buildings
- Large trees
- Mail boxes
- Dumpster
- File cabinets filled with paper files
- Structural columns

### **Concealment**

The term "concealment" means something that can hide a person from view but that would not stop bullets. Although cover is preferable to concealment, concealment is better than plain view when officers are in a high-risk situation. The following are some examples of concealment:

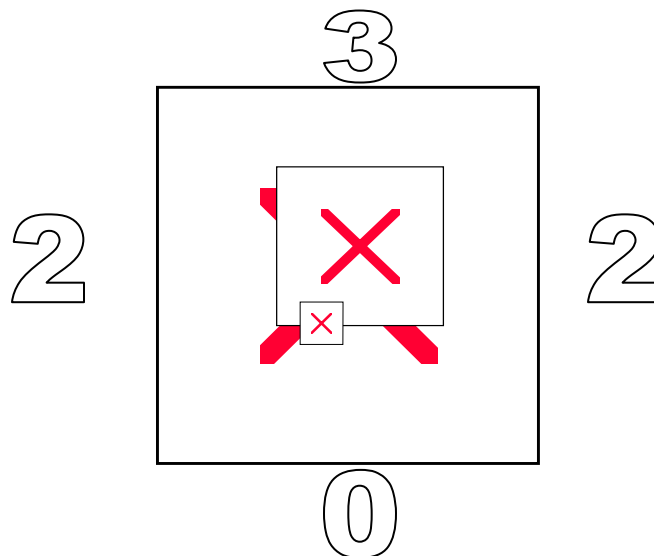
- Darkness/shadows
- Car doors
- Residential trash cans
- Shrubs and small trees
- Most office walls, made of concrete blocks or sheet rock
- Partitions

## **Barriers**

A barrier is an object that will stop a suspect from having a clear path to the officer. Barriers can be as simple as a table, a desk, a car or any other object that a suspect will have to go around or over before accomplishing a hand-to-hand attack. A barrier is very useful during routine administrative functions and in lower threat enforcement situations. A barrier may not necessarily stop bullets or provide concealment. Therefore, good cover should be sought in those situations. By using a barrier, the suspect may never attack an officer even though the suspect has the ability and intent to do so. The presence of a barrier may prevent the suspect from having the opportunity to assault and may allow an officer to use non lethal control options

## **Relative Positioning**

Relative positioning describes the placement of officers in comparison to the suspect. One method used to describe the relative positioning uses the number zero as the position directly in front and three as the position directly behind the suspect. The number two represents the position out from either shoulder. Another method uses compass degrees such as zero, 90, 180, and 270. Regardless of the numbering system used, the approach and subsequent contact of any suspect should be initiated from specific angles or avenues to provide the officer with a physical advantage and a greater margin of safety. These angles are used in enforcement situations where a distance interval has been established with the suspect such as during an interview or when an attempt is being made to control the suspect using an intermediate weapon. For an officer with a firearm aimed at a suspect, the changing of the officer's relative positioning may allow for target isolation, keeping innocent persons out of the sight picture.



## **Communication Skills**

An officer's communication can be broken down into three categories: officer presence, verbalization, and listening, all of which are part of a continuous communication process. Ninety seven percent of law enforcement work involves communicating with the public. An officer can inflame a situation through miscommunication or misinterpreting the communication received. The officer can also de-escalate a potentially violent situation through appropriate application of good communication skills. It is always better to talk someone into voluntary cooperation than to fight them into compliance.

### **Officer presence**

The mere presence of an officer on the scene can sometimes defuse a volatile situation and prevent an assault. Command presence, which includes the officer's appearance, mannerisms, tone of voice, posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, should convey a sense of authority, tempered with compassion. Like actors, officers need to change their nonverbal and symbolic communication for varying situations. In some situations, officers must be a compassionate and caring friend to a victim while other situations may require the stoic enforcement of an unpopular law. Remember it is human nature to make judgments about how someone looks and everything else being equal, a suspect is more likely to challenge an officer who looks inattentive and weak.

### **Verbalizing**

The goals of verbal communication for the law enforcement officer are to direct, to control, and to gather information. Officers should make every effort to de-escalate situations by voice commands and by asking for cooperation. The words used and the tone of voice must convey the message the officer wants to send. Eliminate barriers to communication. When giving directions, keep it simple.

### **Low Threat Assistance/Interview Situations**

When dealing with compliant suspects and passive resisters, verbal commands and requests for assistance are often adequate to accomplish the desired behavior. Always calibrate the intensity of voice to the context of the situation. Ask them their name: personalize the interaction. Give them options, and point out why they would want to cooperate. With victims, provide psychological first aid. Paraphrase their responses and meaning.

### **High Threat/Assaultive Situations**

Be firm, authoritative. Tell them specifically what they must do. Do not use threatening or fighting words or profanity. Continue to give commands while employing other use of force options. When working with a partner, do not give conflicting commands.

### **Emotionally Disturbed Persons/Abnormal Behavior**

Abnormal Behavior can be caused by a variety of conditions, including diminished mental or emotional capacity, drug and alcohol influences, and numerous medical conditions. While generally not dangerous, many people displaying abnormal behavior are highly unpredictable. They are easily frightened and often do not understand simple commands. Techniques for handling abnormal behavior include using extreme caution, assessing the cause of the behavior, calling for assistance, speaking slowly and softly, removing distractions, explaining actions in advance, and using physical contact as a last resort.

### **Listening**

Listening is a critical part of the officer's job. Almost all aspects of law enforcement involve active listening. Hearing is not the same as listening. Listen for the intended meaning of the words used. Listen for feelings and emotions involved. Listen for the nonverbal sounds that indicate understanding. Listen for verbal clues that could indicate an attack. Words and actions should match. Listen for communications/signals between suspects. Listen for tone of voice and



volume. A change in tone or volume could indicate a change in intent. Listen for clues of compliance or surrender. Listen to other officers on the scene: send the same message.

During high stress situations, people often experience auditory exclusion, where the ability to hear is diminished or distorted. For that reason, during most high threat situations (rapid raids, suspect with a weapon) officers should speak loud, clear, and concise using short repetitive commands. Officers should identify themselves as the police to keep it simple and clear. Over accentuate the word “POLICE” so that it will not be confused with the word “PLEASE”, which may happen when it is said rapidly under stress. In extreme situations such as an assault be sure to yell commands loud enough to warn innocent bystander and to get backup.

## **HANDCUFFING**

### **Handcuffing**

Regardless of the specific type of technique or style used to handcuff a suspect there are a few principles that are common to any handcuffing:

### **Position of Advantage/Disadvantage**

Before attempting to apply handcuffs on a suspect, the officer should be in a position of advantage. This usually means the officer is behind the suspect and the suspect is positioned standing with his feet spread wide, toes out and hands behind his back. The kneeling position of disadvantage is with the suspect’s knees together, ankles crossed and sitting back on his ankles with his arms behind the back. The prone position of disadvantage is with the suspect’s feet spread wide, toes out and arms out to the side with his palms up. When positioning the suspect for handcuffing, the officer should have cover officers and distance (minimum of >5 ft. for low threat) and, if necessary, using cover/concealment/barriers. During a face-to-face interaction that spontaneously becomes a handcuffing situation, it is unlikely that distance or cover will be used. Instead, the officer would likely keep close contact to the suspect and direct him to the proper handcuffing position.

### **Speed Counts**

Once in the contact zone (0-5 feet) and the decision to handcuff has been made, get the handcuffs on quickly. Do not get caught up about what direction the keyholes are facing. It is important to have the suspect’s thumbs up and palms out but during a noncompliant arrest even this consideration is not weighted heavily.

### **Handcuff Suspects behind Their Back**

For different handcuffing styles, the suspect’s hands may start in a different position (i.e. on the head), but once both handcuffs are on, the suspect’s hands must finish behind his back. Preferably with the palms out and thumbs up. If the suspect cannot bring his wrists close together behind his back, then two sets of handcuffs secured together may work. Physical restrictions of the suspect, length of time in the handcuffs, court orders and other considerations may justify handcuffing the suspect with his hands in front even though it is less safe. If handcuffing in front, use a martin chain (belly chain).

### **Proper Placement**

Apply the handcuffs around the notches at the wrist, the styloid process of the radius and ulna. Ensure they are properly tightened so that circulation is not cut off to the suspect’s fingers and so

the suspect cannot slip out of the handcuffs. Never leave handcuffs applied over the suspect's clothing i.e., jacket sleeves, because it gives a false sense of tightness and the suspect may easily slip out of the cuffs.

### **Double Lock**

Always double lock the handcuffs before transporting a suspect. This is usually done immediately after tightening although during multiple arrests and other extenuating circumstances it may be better to temporally delay double locking the handcuffs for tactical purposes.

## **SEARCHING SUSPECTS**

### **Principles of Searching**

The following are principles of doing a hands-on search of a suspect. Individual techniques will vary but these general principles should be followed.

### **Position Of Disadvantage**

Based on the threat assessment the suspect must be in a position of disadvantage. This is done to allow for an easier search and to prevent the suspect from harming the officers. Positions of disadvantage may include standing, kneeling or prone positions

### **Holstered Weapon**

The searching officer must not search with his firearm drawn although cover officers may have a weapon drawn under appropriate circumstances. If prior to the search the officer's firearm was out, such as during a weapon recovery, the firearm must be holstered securely prior to any searching of the suspect.

### **Ask About Sharp Objects**

Ask the suspect if he is carrying any needles or sharp objects before the search begins. This question is not a violation of *Miranda* regardless of whether the *Miranda* rights have been read or invoked. Visually inspect personal property before physically searching. Smaller bags and purses may be carefully emptied and contents visually examined before being handled.

### **Wear Gloves**

If an officer who is not wearing gloves encounters soiled or possibly contaminated clothing, he must wash or wipe his hands immediately and put on a pair of gloves before continuing the search. If it is necessary to handle soiled articles as the search continues, do so with extreme caution. If a hypodermic needle, knife or other sharp object is found, one option is to carefully place it in a puncture resistant container.

### **One Searching Officer**

Only one officer should conduct the search of the suspect. This does not preclude a backup officer from helping to restrain the suspect rather; if more than one person conducts the search areas are often overlooked.

### **Systematic and Thorough**

The search should be done in a systematic and thorough manner. There must be a logical sequence to the search or the searcher will miss something. Head to toe and back to front is a simple systematic method. An officer looking where he is searching will also help.

### **Feel, Crush, and Twist**

To prevent accidental punctures the technique of feeling, crushing, and twisting the clothing is used. Conduct a lighter feel search of the areas where needles and sharp items may be located before employing the crush/twist search. Never reach into a pocket without first feeling the outside. There should not be hand to skin (underneath clothing) contact unless necessary to recover something during the search.

### **Secure Items**

All items taken from the suspect should be secured by the searching officer or a backup officer unless it is too dangerous to handle.